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National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

CONTENTS

LEBANON: Bickering prevents progress
toward political objectives of truce 1

THAILAND: Khukrit's bid for
national assembly seat fails 3

[REDACTED]

25X1

EGYPT: Dissension
among the military 5

[REDACTED]

25X1

ETHIOPIA: Insurgents fail
to resolve differences 7

[REDACTED]

25X1

PAKISTAN-FRANCE: Acquisition of
French nuclear processing plant 10

MALAYSIA: Security
forces to be enlarged 11

[REDACTED]

25X1



National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

LEBANON

Beirut remains relatively quiet, and fighting in the mountains east of the city has subsided since the leftists captured the Christian villages of Aynturah and Al Mutayn on Saturday. Lebanese politicians, however, have yet to make any progress toward carrying out the stated objectives of the 10-day truce.

With no one to enforce the cease-fire effectively in many areas, kidnappings, looting, and sniping are on the increase. Similar incidents have marred every previous cease-fire and often sparked renewed violence.

The danger of heavy fighting resuming has become even more real as Lebanese politicians have become bogged down once more in controversy. This time, they are wrangling over the question of where parliament should meet and what forces will provide security.

Originally, Syrian-controlled Palestine Liberation Army units and some elements of the Palestinian Armed Struggle Command were expected to secure the area around parliament. Both Minister of Interior Shamun and Phalanges leader Jumayyil, on the Christian side, however, have objected to meeting "under the guns" of the Palestinians. Shamun, returning to his obstructionist tactics, has flatly refused to attend a meeting of parliament unless Lebanese army units are used to provide security.

With only seven days left before the truce expires, controversy has also resumed over the precise wording of the constitutional amendment under consideration that would clear the way for President Franjiah's resignation and the election of his successor. Lebanese leftist forces under Kamal Jumblatt remain skeptical that Franjiah will agree to step down and are demanding that the amendment spell out when the new president is to take office. Bickering over these matters reflects the more basic inability of the Lebanese and Syrians to settle on a successor to Franjiah.

Syrian President Asad reportedly continues to object to Raymond Edde, the candidate of the leftists and Yasir Arafat. Jumblatt is still adamantly opposed to Ilyas Sarkis, because he wants the new president to be beholden to him for his election, not to Damascus. Pierre Helou has been mentioned as a possible compromise candidate.

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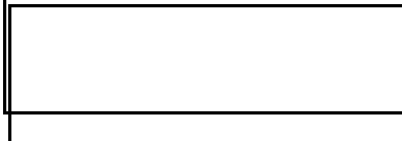
National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

25X1



25X1



Syrians have taken steps to try to prevent the present cease-fire from breaking down and to put pressure on Jumblatt and Arafat not to resume fighting even if negotiations over Franjiyah's successor drag on beyond the expiration date of the truce.

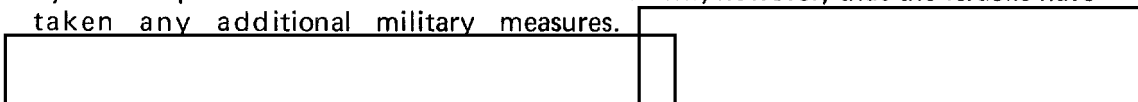


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The US defense attache in Damascus reports that the Syrian army, and probably the air force, were still in a high state of alert Sunday morning, but he saw no evidence that a large-scale military move into Lebanon was imminent.

According to an Israeli press dispatch, northern Israeli settlements have increased their vigilance because of recent Beirut radio reports on the infiltration of Syrian troops into Lebanon. There are no indications, however, that the Israelis have taken any additional military measures.

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National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976



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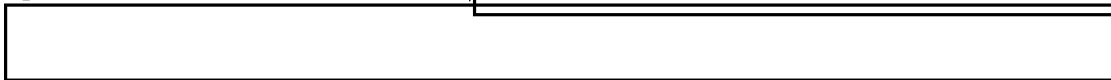
THAILAND

Prime Minister Khukrit Pramot has been defeated in his bid for a seat in the national assembly. He ran in a district heavily populated by military families, and his defeat is almost certainly a reflection of the military's anger over his recent handling of negotiations with the US.

There is no obvious successor, which may prolong the process of forming a new government. Seni Pramot, leader of the center-based Democrat Party and Khukrit's older brother, appears to have the best chance, given his party's strong showing in yesterday's election.

Incomplete returns early today indicated that the Democrats picked up a near majority of seats in the assembly.

It is far from certain, however, that Seni can put together a workable coalition that will survive a vote of confidence in the lower house. He failed last year in part because he lacked the support of key military leaders and conservative political parties. He is now backed by retired army commander Krit Siwara, who switched to Seni in an effort to defeat Khukrit.



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The party will probably look to one of the major conservative parties in order to gain the necessary majority. Such a center-right coalition would probably not make any early major changes in either foreign or domestic policy.



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25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

EGYPT

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[redacted] 50 Egyptian air force and army officers were recently arrested for two separate incidents of rioting over political and economic grievances. Another 50 have reportedly been forced to retire early.

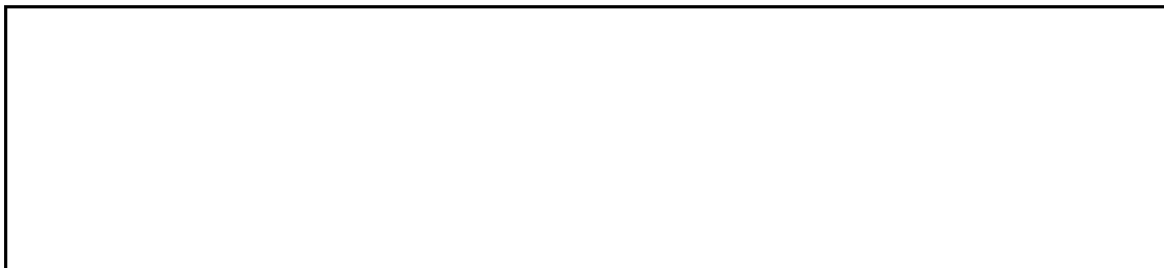
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President Sadat was the main target [redacted]
[redacted] He was blamed for causing the deterioration of Egypt's military position by turning away from the Soviets without assuring a major source of arms from the West. The demonstrators also reportedly believe that Sadat has closed off Egypt's military option and that, as a result, the situation has returned to the no war - no peace impasse of the period before the 1973 war.

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Soldiers are said to be complaining that the military establishment has a second-class status and are growing restless over having to sit in desert trenches, forgotten by the civilian government. The rioters are also reported to have voiced dissatisfaction over the fact that military salaries are not keeping pace with the rising cost of living.

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These incidents constitute the first reported instances for some time of open dissatisfaction with Sadat's policies among the armed forces, and they may explain his extended visit to military units along the Suez Canal late last month.

On March 16, Sadat began what was originally to be a four-day tour to review the progress of reconstruction and to talk to military groups, but midway through it he extended the tour to 10 days and concentrated chiefly on a round of morale-raising addresses to army and air force units. His principal address to the air force was at Bilbays air base.

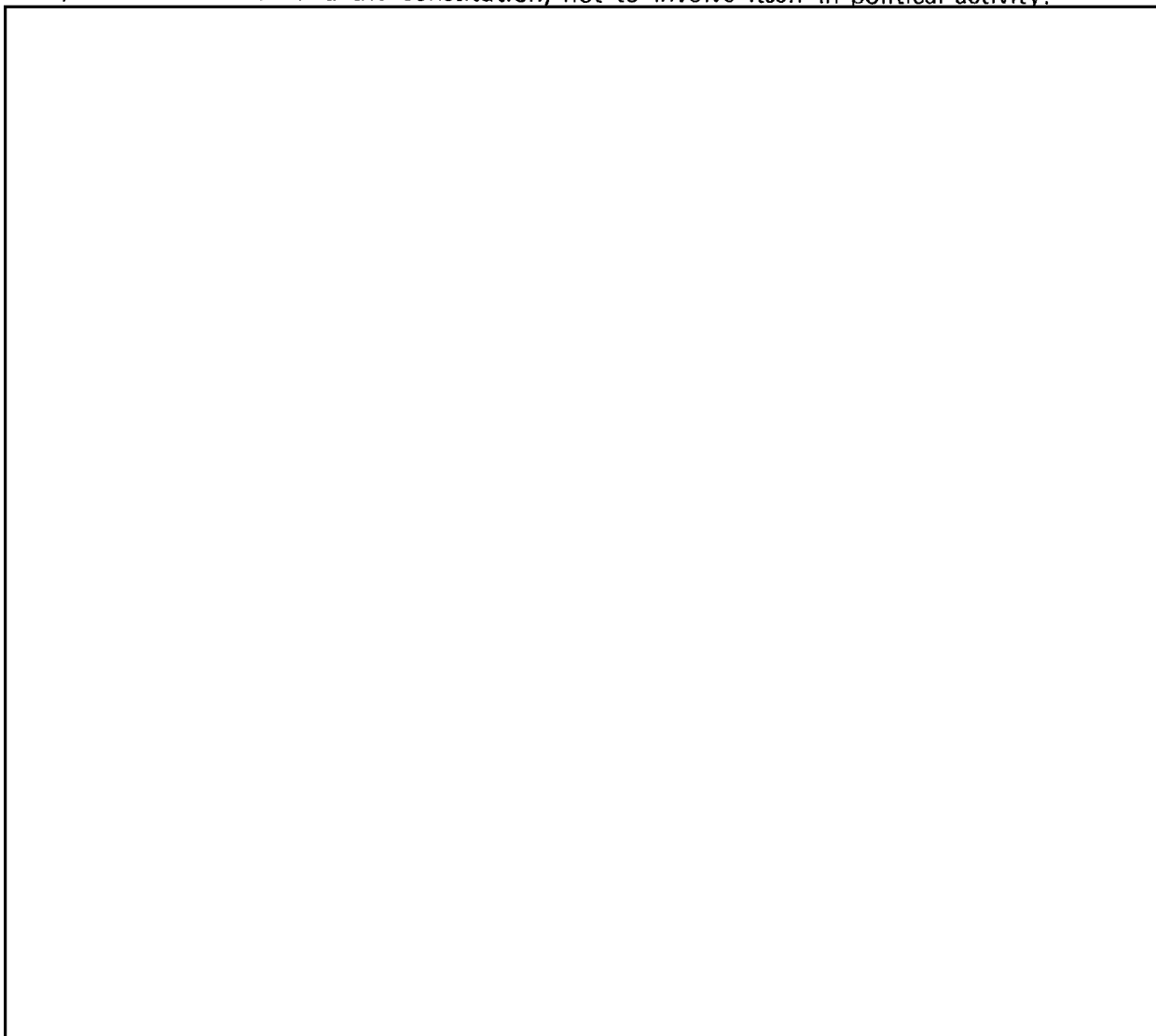
In remarks that may have been intended for those involved in or sympathetic with the riots, Sadat laid heavy emphasis in his speeches on the military's heroism and the debt Egypt owes it after the 1973 war. He spoke frankly about equipment deficiencies, blaming them on the Soviets and promising a concerted effort to right the situation—and to continue his efforts to regain territories occupied by Israel.

25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

At the same time, he made it clear that he believes the military's duty is to protect the nation and the constitution, not to involve itself in political activity.



25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

ETHIOPIA

Military and out-of-country leaders of the Popular Liberation Force (PLF) apparently failed to resolve their differences during a recent meeting in Khartoum, Sudan. As a result, planned talks between the PLF and the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) in regard to their merger agreement of last September failed to materialize. The agreement to merge and to coordinate military operations between the two insurgent groups was never accepted by the military wing of the PLF.

There has been a continuous feud between the two wings of the PLF for some time. There is a personal rivalry between political leader Osman Saleh Sabbe and military command leader Isaias Afework for leadership of the organization. Religious suspicions—Afework is Christian, and Sabbe is Muslim—may also play a part. The out-of-country branch is responsible for collecting funds and weapons from Arab benefactors and for funneling them to PLF forces in Eritrea Province in Ethiopia.

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The in-fighting for arms and funds, in addition to the reportedly growing Christian-Muslim religious split among the leadership, may affect the PLF's ability to conduct operations in Eritrea, and the ability of both insurgent groups to achieve Eritrean independence. Addis Ababa is aware of the factionalism and is sure to encourage further differences in order to keep its opponents from merging.

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

PAKISTAN-FRANCE

Pakistan appears determined to acquire a small French nuclear reprocessing plant, despite US requests for reconsideration. Although the announced purpose of the plant is to produce plutonium for eventual use as reactor fuel, it will bring Pakistan a major step closer to a capacity to manufacture a nuclear explosive device.

France is to supply the facility under a safeguards agreement signed in Paris on March 17. Islamabad has indicated within the past week, through both a government-owned newspaper and private comments by the chairman of Pakistan's atomic energy commission, that it intends to implement the agreement.

The French plant is scheduled for operation in 1980 and could help Pakistan's plans for peaceful nuclear power expansion in the 1980s. It will also give the Pakistanis, if they complete the basic research and design work, the ability to produce a nuclear explosive device quickly, but only by openly violating safeguards. Should Pakistan evade safeguards clandestinely, enough plutonium might be diverted to produce an explosive device by around 1985.



25X1

National Intelligence Bulletin

April 5, 1976

MALAYSIA

The government has authorized the expansion of the police and the army in order to deal firmly with internal security problems.

In mid-March, Prime Minister Hussein approved the formation of three new army battalions during the next 12 to 18 months. They will be stationed in the Kuala Lumpur area to enhance the army's ability to react to civil disturbances. Terrorism by the communists last year and threatened demonstrations by political groups this year probably prompted the move. Two of the new units will be mostly non-Malay, reversing past army expansion practices.

The government has also authorized the addition of 40,000 men to the Royal Malaysian Police, bringing it to 100,000 by the end of the decade. During the next few years, most of the manpower will be assigned to the paramilitary Police Field Force. One new battalion is already in training.

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The government is stressing improvements in training and operations for both the police and the army, and is purchasing new arms.

Army units in the interior have been performing poorly, but internecine fighting among the communists has given them some respite, and morale reportedly is improving.

25X1

Hussein is vigorously pushing the plans for upgrading the security establishment that were first announced last year by the late prime minister Razak. Hussein's concern with internal security as the most immediate problem has apparently produced some results. This year, there have been no serious acts of terrorism in the interior or populated areas. The plans are mostly for long-range, rather than immediate, improvements, but there are difficulties in recruitment and shortages of facilities. The government's approach nevertheless seems balanced and realistic, and internal communist squabbles may provide the time needed to achieve further success.

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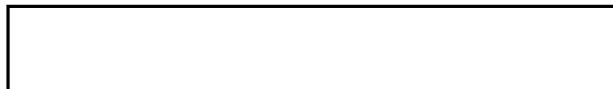
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